

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Prior to this Amendment, claims 1-20 were pending in the application. Claims 1, 7, 8, 14, and 19 are amended to place allowable subject matter in proper form for allowance. Claim 15 is amended to distinguish the claimed computer network from cited references by adding limitations similar to those in allowable claim 1. Claims 5, 6, 12, 13, and 18 are cancelled. New claim 21 presents the method limitations of allowable claim 19 in apparatus form.

No new matter is added by these amendments with support being found at least in the originally filed claims and in Figures 2, 3, and 5 in combination with supporting portions of the specification.

Claims 1-4, 7-11, 14-17, and 19-21 remain in this application for consideration by the Examiner.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the August 14, 2003 Office Action, claims 6, 7, 13, and 14 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 6 was rewritten in independent form by adding the limitations of claim 6 and intervening claim 5 to claim 1 (and canceling claims 5 and 6). Claim 7 was rewritten in independent form including the limitations of claim 1 and intervening claim 5. Claim 13 was rewritten in independent form and its limitations were added to claim 8 along with intervening claim 12. Claim 13 was canceled. Claim 14 which depended from claim 13 was amended to depend from claim 8.

As a result of these amendments to place originally filed and allowable subject matter in proper form (not to address art or indefiniteness rejections), independent claims 1, 7, and 8 are in condition for allowance. Claims 2-4, which depend from claim 1, and claims 9-11 and 14, which depend from claim 8, are in condition for allowance as depending from allowable base claims.

Additionally, claims 19 and 20 were found to be allowable after addressing informalities. Claim 19 was amended to address objected to informalities and not to overcome any prior art or indefiniteness rejections. New claim 21 is written in means-plus language and present the limitations of claim 19 in an apparatus. Hence, claim 19; claim 20, which depends from claim 19; and 21 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Objections

In the Office Action, claims 6, 7, 13-15, and 19 were objected to because of informalities. In response, the claims have been amended where appropriate to address each of the informalities specified in the Office Action.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Additionally, in the Office Action, claims 1-3, 8-10, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,535,518 ("Hu"). This rejection is traversed based on the following remarks.

Claim 1 is amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 6 along with intervening claim 5. Hence, claim 1 is allowable over Hu. Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and are believed allowable because they depend from an allowable base claim.

Similarly, claim 8 is amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 13 along with intervening claim 12. Hence, claim 8 is not anticipated by and is allowable over Hu. Claims 9 and 10 depend from claim 8 and are allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Claim 15 is amended to include limitations similar to claim 1 including the limitations of claim 18 and limitations similar to that provided in allowable claim 6. Hence, claim 15 is believed in condition for allowance.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, claims 4, 11, 16, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hu in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,216,619 (“Dunbar”). This rejection is traversed based on the following remarks.

Claim 4 depends indirectly from claim 1, which has been amended to include the limitations of allowable dependent claim 6 and intervening claim 5. Hence, claim 4 is believed in condition for allowance as depending from an allowable base claim.

Similarly, claim 11 depends indirectly from claim 8. Claim 8 has been amended to rewrite allowable dependent claim 13 in independent form. Because claim 11 depends from an allowable base claim, claim 11 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 16 and 17 depend from claim 15 and are believed allowable for at least the reasons for allowing claim 15. Dunbar does not overcome the deficiencies of Hu, and hence, this combination of references does not teach or suggest each limitation of claim 15.

Additionally, in the Office Action, claims 5 and 12 were rejected under 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hu in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,155,845 (“Beal”). Claims 5 and 12 are canceled by this Amendment, and the rejection is moot.

The Office Action also rejected claim 18 under 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hu in view of Dunbar further in view of Beal. Claim 18 is canceled by this Amendment making this rejection moot.

Conclusions

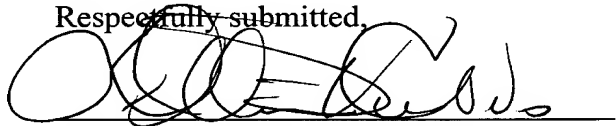
The additional references cited but not relied upon in the Office action have been fully considered. The additional references are believed to be no more relevant than Hu, Dunbar, and Beal, and the pending claims are believed allowable over these references taken alone or in combination.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 08-2025 for the addition of independent claims. Any fee deficiency associated with this submittal may also be charged to Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

It is requested that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: Replacement Sheets